

Guidelines for Chairs of the 8th African Population Conference

Role of the Chair

Thank you for agreeing to serve as chair of a session at the 8th APC. The quality and tenor of the session depends significantly on your work. Your role as chair comprises pre-conference preparation and facilitation at the conference. You can build a network among the presenters; set the tone for the session; make connections among the panelists, the participants and the topics; ensure impartial allocation of the time available; and foster collegial and professional exchange. You will be looked to for guidance and leadership if any challenges arise.

The Scientific Committee offers these guidelines to the chair of a regular or invited session.

1. **Pre-conference:** At least one month before the conference, please connect with all presenters of your session, including discussants.

1.1 Set the ground rules for the session: Lay out the plan for the session and specify the time to be allocated for each presenter or discussant. If you wish to enforce a slide limit in the interest of time, make sure to tell presenters in advance. Be sure to reserve time for audience questions at the end.

Sessions last 90 minutes! For a typical four paper session, a benchmark schedule would be 15 minutes per paper, 20 minutes for the discussant (or 10 minutes each if you have two discussants), and 10 minutes for audience questions.

1.2 All Presenters should upload their papers on the African Population Conference website by October 15, 2019 to make them available to the session's discussant. However, some presenters might forget to post their papers and others might not yet have completed them by this deadline. If the discussant can accept papers after the posted deadline, you and the presenters can negotiate a later deadline. In any case, make it clear to participants that there is a firm deadline, that discussants are not required to discuss any paper received after the deadline, and that posting papers to the meeting website is strongly encouraged.

1.3 Encourage the presenters to share any materials available in advance of the session including presentations, papers, or resource links. This allows presenters to build upon one another's work, identify linkages in their presentations, and save time by not repeating the obvious from someone else's presentation.

1.4 It is the responsibility of the Chair to assure that there is a laptop available for the session. Tell the speakers to send you their presentations at least 24 hours before the session. Kindly, follow up with any presenter who has not sent a presentation and plan to get the presentation on the laptop at least 15 minutes before the session begins. This saves time during the session. Between one hour and 30 minutes prior to the session, check the room and confirm that the computer will connect with the projection equipment. Please consider that Macs might require a special connector that will enable it to plug into a standard VGA cable.

2. At the session:

2.1. Arrive early. Locate the room, identify the speakers and welcome all attendees. Make sure you have the correct pronunciation of participants' names. Welcome the audience, introduce yourself (name and affiliation) as the chair, present briefly the session topic, introduce the speakers and invite them come to the podium.

2.2. Start on time and end on time. This maximizes the time allocated for content and allows the next group the time they need to set up for an on-time start. Do not hesitate to "move the conversation into the halls" if discussion is lasting beyond the allocated time of the session.

2.3. Introduce each presentation. Transition between presentations by thanking the previous presenter and introducing the next, noting the name and affiliation of the individual or group and the general topic if this has not been done at the beginning of the session

2.4. Keep to the order listed in the program. Some people come to listen to one speaker and may be disappointed if the speakers are not in the published order.

2.5. Watch the clock. Warn your speakers as their time draws to a close using written notes indicating the time remaining (typically 5 minutes, 2 minutes, and stop). Be firm. It is imperative that you stop any presenter who has exceeded the allocated time. There are several ways to do this. You can signal to the speaker and the audience that the time is up by politely telling the speaker it is important to stop now. You may try initiating applause during the next pause, simply walk to the front and stand next to the speaker, or finally get up and thank the presenter for the presentation, noting that the session must move on to the next presenter. This will be far easier if you have laid the ground rules in advance of the session via email and reminded the presenters about your responsibility before the session starts.

2.6. Facilitate discussion. Audience discussion is a crucial element of every session and many audience members are disappointed if they don't have the opportunity to engage the panel. Audience discussion should wait until all presenters and discussants have had the opportunity to speak. As a general rule, you should be opening the floor for discussion at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled end time. If you have ample time, you may want to ask the presenters if they want to briefly respond to discussant comments before allowing audience participation. However, do not let this interfere with the audience's opportunity to participate.

2.7. During discussion periods, scan the entire audience for raised hands and call on people in turn, trying to first select people who raised their hands early. Set an expectation for professional, courteous, discourse. Ask that questions be short and targeted and encourage attendees to follow-up after the session as well. If there are many people with questions, avoid letting one person monopolize the discussion. People should introduce themselves (Name and affiliation) before the ask questions.

2.8. Ask people who pose a question to stand up, and speak up so that everyone can hear the question. If the audience cannot hear, ask the presenter to briefly restate the question before answering it.

2.9. Wrap-up and end. Clearly define the conclusion of the session by thanking the presenters and the audience and stating that the session has concluded. At the end of the session, if there is a session following, ask that everyone leave the room and continue the discussion in the foyers so that the next session will have time to set up.

2.10. Troubleshoot. As the chair, people will turn to you should problems arise and expect you to manage the session and respond to challenges. Kindly monitor the room. Should the projector not work, the room be too hot or too cold, or something happen to the room itself (a spill, noise intrusion, etc.), please contact the conference secretariat at uaps@uaps-uepa.org and on phone (+233 (0) 302 500274 or +233 (0) 303 976266).